

**2014 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Third Place: Trebecca McDonald**

Remembering January

Memories of deep snow and icicles—
days when not even ripped snow pants
dared to deter our embrace
of winter storms.

We'd do jumping jacks flat on our backs,
making angels
only to climb out of them,
messing them up.

I see little kids zipped up
in hot pinks and turquoise,
little eskimos crossing the street
and I'm reminded of you, and how

winter would whip our faces and howl in our ears,
Us, two rebels against the cold.

We march carefully now,
observing the pale dust of
winter's last stand.

Yellow Light.

The shrill complaint of an abused chalk board to a piece of chalk
commanded our attention. Her words were dust, ancient like the faded blue river stones
of her eyeglass cords.

The stoplight cards hung neatly in their plastic holders,
reminding us of her instructions.

We began the hum of pretending: flipping pages and sounding out words
and Nathan, who didn't care much for institution
hushed the whispers with a rip of his reading log.

The wad ended up on Miss's desk—
our cheeks burned as we held down our laughter.

Only this time,

Miss did not waste time on a warning.

She marched him out of the room with a red card
and we had recess yanked out from under us like
grass wrenched from the ground.

Bleak

Life's weary outlook.
I can see my reflection
on the swinging pendulum.

It's the curdled milk,
the white sun piercing through
the sky's dross.
It's the rooster with his tenacity.

The incessant rain
causes the ground to swell.
The worms wriggle obliviously
across concrete
in view of the robins.

The window isn't large enough
to swallow the whole day.
In an earthen bowl
I ground up the remnants,
and wait for the wind.

Grace

you had been so many places i don't know
whether you had purposely obscured your father's face,
or if you
just liked the scenery at dusk.
hope was the blurred red sun in those grainy photographs.
mornings when you woke
still protected by the sleeping bag zipper,
the glowing embers of your innocence,
the undisturbed sleep.

*and all i remember now is our shadows on the pavement
your impervious stare*

i had wished the giving would stop.
relics from road trips,
those leather bound pages:

though there weren't enough words
—not enough to save you

you found ways to freeze time into paragraphs.

somewhere,
the binding of a journal cracks,
the ribbon frays.

Not Noon But Ripe

—After “*Open(ing) market (2004)*” by El Anatsui

The sun yawns and stretches up from the horizon,
while weary farmers conquer the red earth.

At midday, time-worn trunks of gleaming wares creak open.
On tables, wax-polished sweet oranges
are stacked in pyramids.

Commerce
is shuffling down the street with children in tow
and thousands of hands, gnarled with labor
press the ripe fruit, releasing the faint scent
of citrus.

El Anatsui commissioned tin boxes painted black
in a staggered flow from the wall—
In another language,
green and gold proudly announce
progress and posterity.

The local voice unifies the West African market
in bright red chevrons.